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REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 9-11 are amended. Claims 1-17, as amended, remain in the application with Claims 4, 8 and 13-17 withdrawn pending allowance of a generic claim. No new matter is added by the amendment to the claims.

The Rejections:

In the Office Action dated February 5, 2008, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Steele U.S. Patent No. 3255807.

Regarding Claim 1, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses an apparatus for guiding a door leaf 22 of a sliding door comprising:

guide elements 50, 52 having an axis of rotation; and

a movable belt 40 engaging the guide element 50, 52, the movable belt 40 having a portion adapted for contact with a guide surface 38 associated with the door leaf 22 whereby when the guide element 50, 52 is mounted on an edge surface 106 of the door leaf 22 to extend generally parallel to a plane of the guide surface 38 with the axis of rotation extending generally perpendicular to a plane of the edge surface 106, the portion of the movable belt 40 contacts the guide surface 38 during sliding of the door leaf 22 in a plane generally parallel to the plane of the guide surface 38.

Regarding Claim 2, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses the guide surface 38 is disposed in a region of a door frame 30 for the door leaf 22 and the guide element 50, 52 is attached to the door leaf 22.

Regarding Claim 3, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses the guide surface 38 is disposed in the door leaf 22 and the guide element 50, 52 is attached to a region of a door frame 30 for the door leaf 22.

Regarding Claim 5, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses guide element 50, 52 is a roller rotatably attached to the door leaf 22.

Regarding Claim 6, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses the guide element holds the movable belt 40 against the guide surface 38.

Regarding Claim 7, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses movable belt 40 seals against the guide surface 38 to prevent air leakage between opposite sides of the door leaf 22. 12:

Regarding Claim 9, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses movable belt 40 has resilient properties (rubber, column 2, line 55).

Regarding Claim 10, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses movable belt 40 has a laminated structure. The inclusion of leaf spring 58 in the belt is construed as a laminated structure.

Regarding Claim 11, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses a sliding door although not a door used in an elevator installation per se, Steele has all the structure set forth in the claims. The intended use in the preamble adds no patentable weight to the claims. Steel discloses a door used in an installation comprising:

a door leaf 22 having an edge surface 106 extending in a plane;

guide elements 50, 52 mounted on the edge surface 106 and having an axis of rotation extending generally perpendicular to the plane of the edge surface 106; and a movable belt 40 engaging the guide elements 50, 52, the movable belt having a portion adapted for contact with a guide surface 38 during sliding of the door leaf 22 relative to the guide surface 38, the guide surface 38 extending in a plane generally perpendicular to the plane of the edge surface.

Regarding Claim 12, the Examiner stated that Steele discloses another guide element 50 mounted on the edge surface 106 and having an axis of rotation extending generally perpendicular to the plane of the edge surface 106 and the movable belt 40 being an endless belt engaging another guide element 50.

Applicant's Response:

In response to Applicant's previous argument that "The door 70 has a lower end surface 80 that extends in a plane parallel to (not perpendicular to as claimed by Applicant) the axis of rotation of the end roller 50" and "the end rollers 50 are mounted in a supporting web 100 that extends downwardly from the door (not mounted on the edge surface as claimed by Applicant)", the Examiner stated that Steele discloses a guide elements 50, 52 mounted on an edge surface,

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referred to as trim element 106, and having an axis or rotation extending generally perpendicular to the plane of the edge surface 106 as claimed by the Applicant.

The Examiner has referenced two different embodiments of Steele in support of the rejection of Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). The rollers 50 and 52, the track member 40, the supporting member 38 and the door element 22 are included in the first embodiment shown in Figs. 1-5. The trim element 106 is included in the second embodiment shown in Figs. 6 and 7. Therefore, Steele does not disclose a single apparatus having all of the elements identified by the Examiner.

Applicant amended independent Claims 1 and 11 to clarify the differences between the claimed invention and the sliding doors shown in Steele. As shown in Applicant's Figs. 1B and 1C, the door leaf 11 has a front surface and an edge surface 16 generally perpendicular to the front surface. The guide surface 18 is generally parallel to the front surface of the door 11 and generally perpendicular to the edge surface 16. The guide element 14, 15 has an axis of rotation generally perpendicular to the edge surface 16. The movable belt 13 engages the guide element 14, 15 and has a portion contacting the guide surface 18.

As shown in Figs. 2 and 4, the Steele sliding door 20 includes the door element 22 having the lower end 30 with a rounded edge that faces generally downwardly toward the supporting member 38 (threshold). The track member 40 is engaged by the rollers 50 and 52 each having an axis of rotation extending parallel to the lower end 30 and the supporting member 38. The lower end 30 carries the gasket 46 with the downwardly extending supporting web 48 to which the rollers 50 and 52 are rotatably secured. A trim piece 54 covers the web 48, if desired, and the rollers 50, 52 are not mounted on the trim piece 54.

If the Examiner considers the trim piece 54 to be Applicant's door leaf edge surface, the trim piece does not extend perpendicular to the front surface 24 of the door element 22 (Applicant's Claims 1 and 11), the supporting member 38 is not parallel to the front surface 24 of the door element 22 (Applicant's Claim 1), and the rollers 50, 52 are not mounted on the trim piece 54 (Applicant's Claim 11).

As shown in Figs. 6 and 7, the Steele sliding door 70 includes the door element 72 having the lower end 80 with a rounded edge that faces generally downwardly toward the supporting

member 88 (threshold). The track member 90 is engaged by the rollers 102 each having an axis of rotation extending parallel to the lower end 80 and the supporting member 88. The lower end 80 carries the gasket 104 with the downwardly extending supporting web 100 to which the rollers 102 are rotatably secured. A trim piece 106 covers the web 100, if desired, and the rollers 102 are not mounted on the trim piece 106.

If the Examiner considers the trim piece 106 to be Applicant's door leaf edge surface, the trim piece does not extend perpendicular to the front surface 74 of the door element 72 (Applicant's Claims 1 and 11), the supporting member 38 is not parallel to the front surface 74 of the door element 72 (Applicant's Claim 1), and the rollers 102 are not mounted on the trim piece 106 (Applicant's Claim 11).

Therefore, Steele does not show or suggest all of the elements of independent Claims 1 and 11.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the above arguments, Applicant believes that the claims of record now define patentable subject matter over the art of record. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.